

St John the Baptist RC Primary School is a small family school where every child is valued. Within the happy and caring school community each child is encouraged to achieve his or her full potential. St Johns is a small Catholic Primary School of approximately 80 pupils in the parish of Dartmouth. We are also part of Plymouth Catholic Anglican Schools Trust (CAST) a newly formed multi-chain Academy Trust comprising 35 Catholic and Anglican Primary and Secondary schools spanning Devon, Dorset and Cornwall. There is a wide social mix and very varied family backgrounds and children from a range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. St John the Baptist school covers an urban residential area and also has children who travel in from local outlying villages. The school has a proactive Parent Teacher Association, called the Friends, who involve themselves mostly in fund-raising and supporting the teachers.

Our School

At St Johns we strive to create the best learning environment possible for our children. We are passionate about the creative arts (and hold the Artsmark Gold Award) and the children participate in a wide range of creative opportunities from visiting artists to putting on whole school drama productions. High quality art displays are evident throughout the school. The school is situated in the beautiful vibrant South Devon town of Dartmouth and the children regularly participate and take their learning into the community and beyond. From food festivals in October to Music Festivals in May, Dartmouth in Bloom (gardening and Art) are just a few of the local events that inspire the children's learning. The school places a strong emphasis on outdoor learning for all of its pupils. We engage with Forest Schools (outdoor learning and bush-craft), residential trips on the River Dart for our older children as well as utilising Dartmoor National park and the beautiful coastline of South Hams and Torbay which provides a perfect platform for cross curricular work in Science, Geography and other curricular areas.

Our children have accessed a wide range of extra-curricular clubs from PE clubs such as street surfing and football to art, gardening, nature club, computing and yoga clubs.

We also promote the use of ICT. We feel that it is essential that our children are equipped with the necessary computing skills for the ever changing 21st Century. All our classrooms have an interactive whiteboard, children have access to a computer suite and laptops which are available for use in the classrooms.

Location

We are located on the outskirts of Dartmouth adjacent to the Dartmouth Academy. We are very fortunate to be located in extensive grounds for our children to enjoy the outdoors. We have an outdoor adventure playground for our Foundation class, large school field and two playgrounds. All our school meals are freshly cooked next door at the Academy kitchens. There is an outdoor swimming pool adjacent to the school and all the children in the school (from Years 1-6) engage in swimming weekly during the summer months.

School Structure

The school has three mixed aged classes and we take children from 4-11 years of age. We have approximately 80 children and we are fortunate enough to get to know our children and their families very well. We have a large number of very highly skilled and experienced teaching assistants who work very closely with our pupils and ensure a high adult to pupil ratio in all of our classrooms.

Class 1 - Foundation/Year 1

Class 2 – Year 2/3

Class 3 – Years 4/5/6

Admissions

As a Catholic school we do not have a designated catchment area but take children from a wide area. We welcome both Catholic and non-Catholic families who wish their children to have a church or Christian based education based upon principles such as caring for each other, manners, respect, trust and so on. We also have children from other faiths and where we can we promote the understanding and development of their faith too. The school has an admissions policy which is available on the school website. Our planned admissions number is 12 pupils per year group but this can vary and we can accept more. We take pupils from a wide range of Early Years settings.

Curriculum Information

Our Curriculum at St Johns is underpinned by our Catholic Mission statement and this permeates all that we do at St Johns with Christ at the centre.

Mission Statement

As a school we are committed to the welfare and development of the individual child - spiritually, morally, socially, psychologically and physically as well as academically. As a Catholic school we are responsible for teaching the whole child in the Word of Christ as told in the Gospels.

We aim to:

- provide a curriculum appropriate to the individual needs of each child, a curriculum that encourages the development of skills, knowledge, understanding and also of values that hold Christ's teaching as central.
- make prayer, worship and liturgy real educational experiences and to contribute positively to the development of faith of each individual in the school community.
- provide opportunities for personal development within an atmosphere of love and respect for each person enabling children to be responsible for their own actions and to be prepared for life beyond school.
- provide opportunities for effective and beneficial interaction between the school and the home, the parish and the wider community; to enable children to understand that they are an important part of the community they live in.
- develop skills of team work, curiosity and inquiry, Independence, concentration, perseverance that our children will need to be life-long successful learners for the world in which they live.
- enable pupils to have the skills for life in key areas such as speaking confidently, reading, writing, ICT and Science and to have high aspirations
- enable the pupils to grow spiritually, morally, culturally and creatively into well rounded responsible members of the community

The school has a development plan which explains how, in practical terms, we are working to achieve these aims.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

Early Years and National Curriculum

When children first start at St Johns they will follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. This is a play-based curriculum as it is recognised that young children learn best through exploration and play. Our children are very fortunate to have a large indoor space for 'messy' play based activities as well as a large, enclosed dedicated outdoor space. During Year 1 the children that are ready to, will start the National Curriculum. The national curriculum runs from Years 1 – Year 6.

Core Subjects

English

This includes reading, writing and speaking and listening and is taught in discrete Literacy lessons as well as time given to individual and guided reading. Skills in literacy are also developed across other curriculum areas. We endeavour to create a life-long love of reading in our pupils by inviting authors into school, participating in world book day and running a library club. There is an expectation that children will read daily at home to an adult. Children are encouraged to become independent, confident writers who are able to write for a variety of purposes. Through all aspects of Literacy work, children are taught to use grammar and punctuation and to present their work in a handwriting style that is fluent, joined and legible.

Mathematics

We aim to develop confident mathematicians who can compute mentally, discuss their mathematics, problem solve and apply their mathematical knowledge to real life situations. The children participate in a challenge Friday activity each week which allows them to reason, problem solve and apply their mathematical learning that week. We aim to use a variety of practical experiences and visual resources, in a stimulating environment to bring the mathematical curriculum to life, making maths fun and enjoyable.

Science

We aim to produce children that think scientifically using an extensive scientific vocabulary. Children are taught through practical investigations and 'hands on' activities to enquire about and appreciate the world around them and communicate their ideas with increasing accuracy and confidence.

RE and Worship

As a Catholic school our Mission Statement is central to all we teach and do. Religious Education is also taught as a specific subject throughout our school. Through RE we aim to provide the children with appropriate learning experiences that allow them to experience the awe and beauty of God's world through their everyday living. We follow the God Matters scheme - a scheme particularly developed for teaching RE in Catholic primary schools. Through the scheme the children are given opportunities for reflection and we join together on a daily basis for our Acts of Worship as a school community.

Foundation subjects

These include Computing, Geography, History, Art and Design, Design Technology, French, Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) are linked together and form a creative curriculum. Whilst some areas may be taught discretely, a topic approach is usually used as it is recognised that children learn

best through a joined up approach and making links with their learning. Details of topics are sent home at the start of the school year, Where ever possible the interests of the children is planned for to increase engagement and interest.

PSHE and Sex and Relationship Education

Work on PSHE is based upon Christian principles and recognises the uniqueness of the individual child. It is based upon teaching the children to respect themselves, form positive relationships with others and make informed choices. Parents do have the right to withdraw their child from sex education. Please let the head teacher know in writing.

General Information

Attendance and punctuality

School starts at 8.50am and children are expected to be in school at this time. If a child misses just 10 minutes of learning a day then this equates to almost an hour a week and 6 days over a school year. Children who arrive late often feel unsettled and anxious about joining the class and this can impact on the learning for the morning.

The attendance policy can be found on the school website but the main points are:

- children are expected to attend school every day and attendance at school is a legal requirement and gives your child the very best chance to maximise their learning opportunities
- an absence is authorised if a child has been away for a legitimate reason, eg. illness. The school should be phoned on the first morning of absence and then a written explanation sent on the child's return.
- an absence is unauthorised if the child is away from school without permission of both school and parent.
- if attendance falls below 90% (an average of one day per fortnight) and continues the Education Welfare Officer will become involved.
- family holidays taken during term time are usually recorded as unauthorised absences and may result in a fine being issued
- awards are given for good attendance. The LA sets attendance targets yearly. Attendance must be over 96% to be judged as 'good'.

Accidents and Medication

Should a child hurt themselves it is recorded in the school's accident book which is kept in the staffroom. If a child has a bump to the head, parents are always informed. Should a child require a visit to the hospital and parents are not available, a member of staff will take them and keep the parents informed. The member of staff will stay with the child until the parent arrives. If a parent requests medication to be administered to a child during the school day they should sign the relevant form available from the school office. The medicine will be kept in the staff room and administered by a member of staff. Only medicines prescribed by a doctor can be administered.

Access for the Disabled

Our school is built on the level and is therefore accessible to wheelchairs. We have a disabled toilet facility. The school endeavours to promote equality of opportunity for disabled pupils, staff, parents, carers and other people who use or may wish to use the school. We have a disability equality policy

which illustrates how we plan to meet these duties. This is available on request from the school office.

Parental Involvement in School

At St Johns we believe in actively involving parents in all aspects of school life. We have many parents who regularly spend time in school listening to reading, helping with craft activities and assisting with extra-curricular activities. Parents who have skills relating to a topic being studied come in their professional capacity and talk to the children about their job. If you have particular skills that might be useful, or if you would like to spend time in the classroom under the direction of the class teacher, please let us know. Parents are also involved through the work of the Friends and on the Board of Governors.

Friends of the School

The Friends of the School are a very active and supportive group of parents, governors and parishioners. They hold many social and fund raising events throughout the school year including:-

- Christmas and Easter bazaars
- Family Fun Afternoon
- Family BBQ and disco
- School discos for the children

Funds raised are used to benefit all our children, including some trips and also enabling the whole school to share in Christmas dinner together.

Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints

It is in the best interests of everyone that complaints are expressed and resolved as quickly as possible. We would hope to resolve matters informally. In the first instance see the class teacher and if your complaint is unresolved then see the head teacher. Should they be required however, the school has formal arrangements for dealing with complaints.

Equality policy

At St Johns we aim for all pupils to engage as fully as possible in every part of school life. The school will actively advance equality opportunities, foster good relations and eliminate discrimination or harassment across all the protected characteristics of school life. Our Equality policy is available on the school website.

School Meals and Snacks at Morning Break

Children may bring a packed lunch or have school meals which are available at a cost of £2.50 per meal. The meals are currently produced by Dartmouth Academy. Please apply online for free school meals. There is a link on the home page of the website. However, please remember that all pupils in YR, Y1 and Y2 are entitled to a free school meal every day regardless of income and no specific form needs to be completed.

The school promotes Healthy Eating. Children eat only fruit or vegetables at the morning break. Free fruit and vegetables are presently provided for KS1 children. Ideas for healthy packed lunches can be found at www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/parents

Charging for School Activities

The school invites voluntary contributions from parents in support of particular activities that take place during the day, e.g. educational visits, occasional craft activities etc. In the event of voluntary contributions not covering the full cost then the balance may be funded from the school budget subject to funds being available. If funds are not available, the activity will have to be cancelled.

The School's Staff and their Responsibilities

Teaching Staff

Mrs Hamilton	Head teacher
Mrs McClounnan	Teaches Class 1
Mrs Waiters	Teaches Class 2
Mrs Brown	Teaches Class 3

Non-Teaching Staff

Ms S Hubbard	Learning Support Assistant Mealtime assistant Cover supervisor Mostly based in class 2
Mrs M Lang	Learning Support Assistant Mealtime assistant Cover Supervisor Mostly based in class 1
Mrs E Cusack	Learning Support Assistant Works across the school
Miss A Bastin	Learning Support Assistant Mealtime assistant Mostly based in class 3
Mrs N Jackson	Mealtime assistant
Mrs H Bridges	Senior Administrator
Mr J Smale	CaretakerCleaner

School Uniform

We pride ourselves in the smart appearance of our pupils. All children are required to wear the school uniform. Each child is given a book bag free of charge when they start at the school. Sweatshirts, polo shirts and items specific to St Johns can be purchased online at Mapac. All other non-specific items can be purchased at various retailers.

Uniform List

Flat black shoes (not trainers or boots)

Grey/white socks or tights

White polo shirt

School sweat shirt

Smart grey trousers or shorts (not cargo type/jogging bottoms) or grey pinafore or skirt

Navy/royal blue and white gingham dress in summer

PE kit

Plain navy blue or black shorts (not lycra)

School PE T shirt or plain white T shirt

Trainers

Black plimsolls for Class 1

Plain navy/black tracksuit bottoms

Grey or white socks

PE bag

Swimming costume and towel for swimming

Notes:

- All articles of clothing, including footwear **MUST** be named.
- For safety reasons, no earrings except 1 pair of small studs may be worn, no other jewellery except watches and a small cross and chain may be worn in line with County health and safety guidelines.
- No valuable watches should be brought in to school.
- Mobile phones are not allowed in school. We cannot accept any responsibility for loss or damage to jewellery or watches.
- All jewellery has to be removed for PE, including swimming - this includes earrings.

How to find us

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